

Committee on Finance and the Northampton City Council

Councilor David A. Murphy, Chair

Councilor Jesse M. Adams

Councilor Maureen T. Carney

Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge

**City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street
Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building
Northampton, MA**

Meeting Date: March 22, 2016
5:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

1. Meeting Called to Order: At 5:00 pm Councilor Murphy called the meeting to order.
2. Roll Call: Committee members present were: Councilors Murphy, Carney and LaBarge. Councilor Adams was absent. Also present from the City Council were: Councilors Gina-Louise Sciarra and Ryan R. O'Donnell. No other City Councilors were present.
3. Approve Minutes of Previous Meetings: Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the minutes of March 3, 2016 and March 9, 2016; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Adams).
4. Public Hearing Regarding the FY 2017 Capital Improvement Program:

In accordance with The Charter of Northampton, Massachusetts, Article 7 Finance and Fiscal Procedures, Section 7-5: Capital Improvement Program, (b) Public Hearing, the City Council via its Committee on Finance considered the Capital Improvement Program FY 2017-FY 2021 submitted by Mayor Narkewicz.

At 5:03 p.m. Councilor LaBarge moved to open the Public Hearing; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Adams).

Mayor Narkewicz presented the Capital Plan; Susan Wright, Finance Director was also present.

The Program is a roadmap of the anticipated capital projects for the next five fiscal years and includes the anticipated funding mechanisms. The City Council is not to approve the funding or spending at this time, however, they will be asked to adopt the Program via a resolution that will be submitted in the near future.

The Program includes definitions of what is considered a capital project. Regarding the process, the Mayor works closely with key department heads and the Finance Director to identify specific needs. The Mayor also has an ad-hoc Capital Improvement Program Committee with membership from the School Committee, School Department, City Council, the public and his staff. Department Leaders who submit capital project needs also participate in the meetings as needed. Projects are prioritized by department leaders. Funding sources are also part of the C.I.P.; smaller projects are paid out of cash capital or free cash or capital stabilization fund. Parking Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Funds will support parking related capital projects. Various revolving funds and CPA funds may also be tapped to pay for projects as will reprogrammed dollars from other projects. The Enterprise funds (water, sewer, stormwater) will be available for related projects.

Mayor Narkewicz projects that there will be 97 projects that will cost \$59,575,423. Narrative for each project is available in the Program catalog.

Key projects highlighted include:

- Building: new inspection vehicles
- Central Services: LED Streetlight Program; paving and roof projects; Forbes Library window replacement and climate control system for special collections room; parking garage repairs and maintenance
- Northampton Public Schools: roof projects; security system upgrades; cafeteria projects; gym floor replacement at RR school; grounds equipment purchases
- Public Safety: Dispatch radio console purchase and city-wide radio hardware purchases
- DPW: water and sewer enterprise projects; street resurfacing; Clement Street Bridge repairs; Cemetery Preservation projects; new city-wide fueling depot
- Fire/Rescue: replacement of engine tanker; communications equipment upgrades
- Information Technology: VoIP phone system replacement
- Planning: downtown and parking "wayfinding" project; tax title for City priority purchases; rail trail extension designs
- Police: firing range completion

Mayor Narkewicz indicated that police cruisers and ambulances are now part of the operating budget under OOM. The Mayor will be coming forward with financial orders for some select high priority capital projects, including moving forward with a new phone system for the city. The Clement Street Bridge project was also highlighted by the Mayor. Under a previous capital plan, the city hired an engineer to assess the needs of the bridge to keep it safe and open. Funding for the bridge in the current Program is to carry out some of the needed repairs to preserve the bridge for the next 4 - 5 years. The city will be seeking assistance from the DOT for that project.

Councilor LaBarge asked about the lifespan of an engine tanker. Mayor Narkewicz noted that the life of the vehicle is based on engine hours and mileage. The current engine has already been rebuilt. The city will look to buy a stock engine off a bid list and then customize it based on the city's need.

The sidewalks and traffic calming line item currently has a backlog of funds that the Mayor will look to deploy on sidewalk and traffic calming projects. As a result, the Mayor has re-allocated FY 17 funds for that line item for other projects. A list of sidewalk projects is kept by the Planning and Sustainability Department; most sidewalks on the list will serve sidewalk travelers close to schools.

Regarding the signage line item under the Planning and Sustainability Department, the money for the first year is to fund a study; money for other years are to fund projects identified as part of that study.

Councilor LaBarge noted that there are issues with sidewalks close to Ryan Road School. She noted safety issues during inclement weather and the fact that residents are concerned with safe passage to the RR school.

Mayor Narkewicz indicated that there is still money available for Tax Title projects.

Alex Ghiselin of 164 Riverside Drive indicates that the Clement Street Bridge is currently in the same condition that it was in 1988. The bridge is seriously corroded. There was a plan to replace the bridge, however, due to public outcry, the bridge was rehabilitated. The state supported rehabilitation of the bridge in the early 1990's. There has been no maintenance on the bridge in 25 years. It is an iron bridge and it needs routine maintenance. He supports the Mayor's request for funding; it is not a solution to the problem, but the city will be able to maintain minimum standards for the bridge. He asks the committee to look at the Greenman Pederson report that was finalized in February. Mayor Narkewicz indicates that repair of the bridge is not a high priority for the state. While it is a low priority for the state, it accommodates 3,000 trips a day for Northampton residents.

There were no other members from the public in attendance.

At 5:42 p.m. Councilor Carney moved to close the Public Hearing; Councilor LaBarge seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Adams).

The committee does not need to make a recommendation back to City Council. The City Council will consider a resolution about the C.I.P. in the near future.

5. New Business - None

6 At 5:44 p.m. Councilor LaBarge moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Adams).

Prepared by:

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